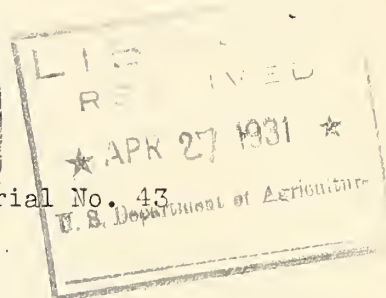
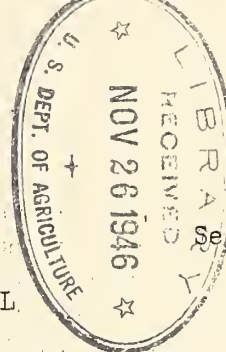


## **Historic, Archive Document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



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Excerpt from a radio talk by  
W. W. Vincent, chief, western district,  
Food and Drug Administration, U. S.  
Department of Agriculture, broadcast  
through KGO, San Francisco, and associated  
N.B.C. stations, April 16, 1931.



#### HOW TO READ THE LABEL

#### "Canners' Bill"

Heretofore "standard" grade as applied to most canned commodities has had a vague meaning. One canner's standard grade differed from another's. The "standard" peaches of Georgia, Michigan and California were all different. Usually they represented the lowest grade packed. Certain packers have even failed to peel them. It is going to be different before long. Congress has passed an amendment to the food and drugs act. In a short while, all manufacturers of certain canned commodities must differentiate upon the label between material of substandard character and that of better quality.

The Food and Drug Administration is a regulatory unit, empowered to enforce certain laws, the most important of which is the food and drugs act. The Department did not sponsor this amendment to the pure food law. The amendment was formulated, introduced, and put through Congress at the instigation of the canning industry. That's really peculiar. An united industry sponsored and secured the enactment of legislation aimed and designed to further regulate that industry. The object of this amendment is to create more confidence on the part of consumers in canned foods. It will eliminate, in part, certain trade abuses. The canning industry is forcing itself honestly to label all substandard canned goods coming within the specifications of the amendment and the measure they have enacted authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to determine, establish, and promulgate reasonable standards of quality, condition and/or fill of container for each class of canned foods except those meat products subject to the Federal meat inspection act and except canned milk. Each standard created will apply to a generic product, e.g., the standard for salmon will cover all species, including Reds to Chums. The amendment empowers the Secretary of Agriculture to prescribe and promulgate a form of statement which must appear in a plain and conspicuous manner on each package or label of canned food which falls below the standard promulgated, and this he has done. You are going to see before long on each can of substandard canned goods the following statement: "Below U. S. Standard Low Quality But Not Illegal." The amendment, officially known as the Mapes Bill, commonly called the Canners' Bill, was approved by the President on July 8, 1930. Considerable progress has been made in the formulation of these standard definitions. Peas, pear, and peach standard grades are already established, and on May 18 next any substandard cans of these three products which enter interstate commerce will carry the "Below U. S. Standard" designation. Other standards will shortly be announced.

These official standards are going to require normal color, normal flavor, and an acceptable degree of tenderness in the canned products. When you begin to encounter canned products with the statement: "Below U. S. Standard Low Quality But Not Illegal" emblazoned upon the can in large type, remember, they are not unfit for food. They are merely below the new U. S. standard for the particular commodity. They will sell for less money than the better quality of canned products you ordinarily encounter. Certain

canned fruits are sometimes packed in sugar sirups of varying strength, and sometimes in water. Such water-packed material will bear a designation such as "Water pack pears" or "peaches," providing the material otherwise meets the standard. I anticipate that in time some canners will, in view of this amendment, choose to give you more informative labeling on their other grades of materials; this in order you may know whether you are receiving a fancy, choice or standard product.

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